

Agricultural Marketing Service  
Cotton Division  
Grading Branch  
Classing Office  
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Cotton)  
GS-1980-11  
Permanent and Seasonal

SJ 360

## INTRODUCTION

This position is located in a local classing office of the Cotton Division. This office is one of several classing offices located in a major cotton producing area through which are administered programs on cotton, cottonseed, cotton linters, and related commodities provided for in legislative and administrative requirements in connection with standards, marketing services, and allied regulatory responsibilities.

## MAJOR DUTIES

The incumbent provides technical supervision for the activities of 5 to 10 cotton classers. Performs appeals classing and futures classing as needed. Negotiates the resolution of problems and discusses program services with industry members. Instructs cotton classer trainees. The position is located in a classing office which is responsible for the examination and evaluation of cotton to determine its official U.S. class and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations.

Reviews and coordinates the work of full performance level classers (cotton graders) to assure that they are adhering to a common level of classing in relation to the standards.

Serves as troubleshooter, providing technical advice to full performance level classers on unusual problems.

Oversees checklots to assure they are being obtained in accordance with instructions.

Prepares production reports.

Reviews for adherence to specifications cotton samples collected for use in surveys, studies, demonstrations, standards, and training programs.

Reviews local classifications upon appeal.

Discusses program and operational problems with producers, ginner, merchants, and representatives of their organizations.

Develops lesson plans, assembles course materials, and teaches in 6-month classer training school.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-7, 1250 pts.

Exceptionally broad and thorough knowledge of the characteristics of cotton in relation to particular areas of production; thorough knowledge of cotton grading standards, regulations, principles, and methods; and thorough knowledge of cotton harvesting and processing techniques affecting an extensive range of qualities to make final authoritative classification determinations on difficult, borderline, and controversial cotton samples and to detect and identify defects and their causes.

Exceptional skill in interpreting and applying an extensive range of cotton standards and manually and visually classing cotton samples to produce consistently accurate results in difficult borderline cases.

Skill in explaining and demonstrating cotton classing techniques and principles to guide and advise full performance level graders on difficult determinations and to teach basic principles and techniques to trainee cotton graders.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls Level 2-3, 275 pts.

The Area Director assigns the work group for which the classer is responsible.

The classer independently coordinates the activities of this group, including borderline grading determinations and unusual classing problems.

Overall coordination of the activities of the Classing Office (CO) is provided by the Area Director who is the official supervisor of all CO personnel and who bears primary responsibility for industry relationships.

Factor 3 - Guidelines Level 3-3, 275 pts.

The primary guidelines consist of official cotton standards (physical and descriptive). Written and oral instructions and definitions, as well as interpretation of official grade, are also used.

The employee uses extensive judgment, particularly in assuring a common level of classification and in evaluation of unusual technical problems. Judgments must be made rapidly, based on seasoned working knowledge of cotton classification.

Factor 4 - Complexity Level 4-4, 225 pts.

The work involves varied processes and methods such as futures and appeals grading of cotton covering an extensive range of cotton qualities; development of lesson plans and course materials for cotton grading classes; formal classroom instruction of graders; oversight and technical guidance and review of groups of cotton graders; and oversight of cotton grading operations.

Decisions regarding what needs to be done vary according to the nature of the assignment (e.g., instruction, futures or appeals classing, or oversight of cotton classing operations) and according to the particular operating problems and kinds of cotton classed at each cotton classing station.

The work requires making many decisions concerning such things as the proper methods for handling unusual samples, identification of the causes of defects in cotton, the best approach to solving questionable variations in the level of cotton classing decisions of graders within a classing office, and methods of classroom instruction of cotton graders.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect Level 5-4, 225 pts.

The work involves reviewing the determinations of a group of cotton classers and providing them with advice on problem cases. It includes appeals decisions, and may include classing of futures cotton. Determinations made by the employee are considered authoritative. Additionally, the employee is responsible for the training of future classers and for the overall coordination of a group of workers.

The effectiveness of the employee's judgment and coordination have a broad impact on the quantity and quality of service provided to producers, handlers, and buyers.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts Level 6-2, 25 pts.

Contacts include other employees in the laboratory. They also include producers, ginner, and representatives of trade organizations and producer organizations. Contacts are established on a routine basis.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts Level 7-3, 120 pts.

Contacts with other laboratory employees are for the purpose of assuring adherence to policies, instructions, and standards, and for providing guidance and/or training. Contacts with industry personnel are for the purpose of investigating and explaining problem issues, obtaining information on production and marketing, and promoting Federal programs.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands Level 8-2, 20 pts.

Work requires constant standing and extensive use of fingers, hands, arms, and shoulders. The duties require physical dexterity and mental alertness, and they are extremely tiring, both mentally and physically.

Factor 9 - Work Environment Level 9-2, 20 pts.

The work environment exposes the employee to crowded conditions. Moderate discomfort may be experienced due to presence of cotton dust.

TOTAL - 2435 POINTS